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Lucia A Keegan 10/11/2006 09:53:09 AM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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Text:

UNCLAS SENSITIVE PARIS 06641

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ACTION: AGR  
INFO: ECON TRDO UNESCO SCI POL ECNO DCM AMB

DISSEMINATION: AGRX  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AGR: EBERRY  
DRAFTED: AGR: MCHENARD  
CLEARED: ECON: JHENNESSEY-NILAND SCI:RDRY

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2000  
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INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES  
RUEHMRE/AMCONSUL MARSEILLE 1355  
RUEHSR/AMCONSUL STRASBOURG 0195  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2503  
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SIPDIS

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STATE FOR OES; EUR/ERA AND EB (SPIRNAK);  
STATE PASS USTR FOR MURPHY;  
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SUBJECT: FRENCH PRESS REACTION TO THE WTO BIOTECH RULING

REF: (A) Paris 6159; (B) Paris 5262; (C) Paris 2439

1.(SBU) Summary: French media reaction to the WTO panel ruling on the biotech case has been muted but objective. The French Government will wait for the EU's decision whether to appeal the decision before taking any further action on its biotech ban. End Summary.

12. (U) The French media has reacted objectively to the release of the WTO's final ruling on the case filed by the U.S., Canada and Argentina against the EU's de facto moratorium on approving agricultural biotech products and other EU Member States' (MS) bans on biotech products approved by the EC.

13. (U) All press articles, whether in the popular or agricultural press, underlined that the WTO did not sanction the EU for its moratorium as it found this has already been lifted, but focused on the MS bans, as being inconsistent with SPS rules. The French press generally viewed the WTO ruling as balanced. Several French papers also commented that the WTO did not reach a conclusion on the safety

of biotech products.

¶4. (SBU) The French press did not comment on the fact that France's ban on two varieties of GM rapeseed was among those cited by the WTO or that France will have to come into conformity with the WTO ruling. France's ban on two varieties of biotech rapeseed, formalized in decrees published in the French Official Journal (equivalent to the U.S. Federal Register), was set for renewal this month. However, French MinAg sources report that the French government will not take any action before the EU decides whether to file an appeal to the WTO panel decision. Of interest, the varieties of biotech rapeseed banned by the French government are unlikely to appeal to French farmers as the products are outdated, and GM canola would not provide the clear agronomic and economic advantages that GM corn does.

Stapleton